

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sanders Farm  
other names/site number VDHR file no. 098-0192

2. Location

street & number 3908 Fort Chiswell Road N/A not for publication  
city or town Max Meadows X vicinity  
state Virginia code VA countyWythecode 197 zip code 24360-6819

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of  
Action  
  
☐ entered in the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ removed from the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sanders Farm  
Name of Property

Wythe Co., Va.  
County and State

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)  
count.)

☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the

| Contributing | Noncontributing |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 13           | 2 buildings     |
| 3            | 4 sites         |
| 1            | 1 structures    |
| 0            | 0 objects       |

17 2 Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

| Category       | Subcategory         |
|----------------|---------------------|
| DOMESTIC       | single dwelling     |
| DOMESTIC       | secondary structure |
| COMMERCE       | department store    |
| AGRICULTURE    | storage             |
| AGRICULTURE    | agricultural field  |
| AGRICULTURE    | animal facility     |
| EXTRACTION     | extractive facility |
| TRANSPORTATION | rail-related        |
| TRANSPORTATION | road-related        |

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

| Category          | Subcategory         |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| DOMESTIC          | single dwelling     |
| DOMESTIC          | secondary structure |
| AGRICULTURE       | storage             |
| AGRICULTURE       | agricultural field  |
| AGRICULTURE       | animal facility     |
| VACANT/NOT IN USE |                     |

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

|            |          |
|------------|----------|
| foundation | Stone    |
| walls      | Brick    |
| roof       | Slate    |
| other      | Wood     |
|            | Concrete |

## Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Sanders Farm**  
Name of Property

**Wythe Co., Va.**  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

\_\_\_\_\_

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_

ENGINEERING

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

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### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved

### Period of Significance

Ca. 1880-1953

### Significant Dates

Ca. 1880

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

unknown

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University

\_\_\_ designated a National Historic Landmark

\_\_\_ Other

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

Name of repository:

# \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# \_\_\_\_\_

Sanders Farm  
Name of Property

Wythe Co., Va.  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** approximately 170 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

|   | Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing       |
|---|------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------------|
| 1 | 17   | 511280  | 4081640  | 3    | 17      | 511950 4081420 |
| 2 | 17   | 511900  | 4081900  | 4    | 17      | 512300 4081450 |

☒ See continuation sheet.

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

|                 |   |           |                         |
|-----------------|---|-----------|-------------------------|
| name/title      | <u>J. Daniel Pezzoni</u>                |           |                         |
| organization    | <u>Landmark Preservation Associates</u> | date      | <u>January 17, 2003</u> |
| street & number | <u>6 Houston St.</u>                    | telephone | <u>(540) 464-5315</u>   |
| city or town    | <u>Lexington</u>                        | state     | <u>VA</u>               |
|                 |   | zip code  | <u>24450</u>            |

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

##### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

##### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

##### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

|                 |   |           |                       |
|-----------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| name            | <u>Bobby Joe Jennings (owner and contact)</u> |           |                       |
| street & number | <u>144 Foxfire Road</u>                       | telephone | <u>(276) 699-6819</u> |
| city or town    | <u>Max Meadows</u>                            | state     | <u>VA</u>             |
|                 |   | zip code  | <u>24360</u>          |

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

### Summary

The Sanders Farm is located at 3908 Fort Chiswell Road (US Highway 52) near Fosters Falls in southeast Wythe County, Virginia. The nominated area of approximately 170 acres lies on the north side of the New River, a tributary of the Mississippi River system, and comprises bottomland and open and wooded hillsides. The elevation on the river lies at just over 1,900 feet above sea level. The highest elevations, at the north end of the nominated area, approach 2,300 feet. Bounding the nominated area on the west side is Interstate 77 and its twin New River bridges, which stand approximately 110 feet above the southwest end of the nominated area. Crossing the southwest corner of the nominated area are the two-lane Route 52 and the north end of the Route 52 Jackson Ferry Bridge (the bridge is excluded from the nominated area). Visible from the property across the New River are the Shot Tower, a stone tower erected in the early nineteenth century for the making of lead shot and now interpreted as the Shot Tower State Historical Park, and the 1880s Cripple Creek line of the Norfolk & Western Railroad, a transportation improvement that supported the Hematite Iron Company Mine operation on the Sanders Farm (see Section 8) and is now being developed as a rails-to-trails conversion.

Most of the farm's resources are clustered at the southwest end of the nominated area on the north side of Route 52. Principal among these resources is the Sanders farmhouse, known as the Brick House, a two-story Victorian house of brick construction built about 1880 (probably in 1879-80). The house is distinguished by its ornamental gables and porches, and, on the interior, by plaster ceiling medallions and other decorative features. The outbuildings are arrayed in a loosely organized double row extending from directly behind the house eastward. Functionally, the outbuildings at the west end of the group are more domestic in character; those near the center have a more public orientation; and those at the east end are farm related. The easternmost outbuildings include a cold frame with a stepped front parapet, a vaulted stone springhouse, and a one-story brick outbuilding that appears to have served as servants quarters. Next are a cinder block store with an upstairs apartment and an accompanying privy, a frame vehicle repair shop, and a stone reservoir. The farm buildings include a large frame corncrib, a smaller log corncrib, and a frame gambrel-roofed barn. Northeast of this main group of resources is a second group consisting of a one-story tenant house, apparently of boxed construction, associated ruinous outbuildings, and stone bridge abutments. At the north end of the nominated area

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Description (continued)

is the site of the Hematite Iron Company Mine, a complex of rock formations and tram line beds.

## Inventory

1. Brick House. Ca. 1880; 1930s. Contributing building.
2. Cold frame. Ca. 1900. Contributing building.
3. Springhouse. Ca. 1880. Contributing building.
4. Servants quarters. Ca. 1880. Contributing building.
5. Wood shed. Mid-20th c. Contributing building.
6. Reservoir. Ca. 1880. Contributing structure.
7. Shop. Ca. 1920. Contributing building.
8. Store. Early 1950s. Contributing building.
9. Store privy. Early 1950s. Contributing building.
10. Barn foundation. Late 19th c. Contributing site.
11. Granary. Early 20th c. Contributing building.
12. Barn. Early 20th c. Contributing building.
13. Corncrib. Late 19th c. Contributing building.
14. Scales house. Early 20th c. Contributing building.
15. Tenant house. Ca. 1920. Contributing building.
16. Bridge abutments. Late 19th c. Contributing site.
17. Hematite Iron Company Mine. Late 1880s. Contributing site.
18. Play house. 1960s. Noncontributing building.
19. Shed ruin. Early 20th c. Noncontributing site.
20. Machinery shed ruin. Mid-20th c. Noncontributing site.
21. Machinery shed. 1990s. Noncontributing building.
22. Tenant house shed ruin. Mid-20th c. Noncontributing site.
23. Tenant house privy ruin. Mid-20th c. Noncontributing site.
24. Transmission line. Early 1970s. Noncontributing structure.

## House Exterior

The Brick House has a T-shaped plan with a two-story forward and backward-projecting

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Description (continued)

wing on the left-hand (west) side. The house is constructed of American-bond brickwork with Flemish variant on the south-facing front elevation. The mortar joints are pencilled, and next to the front entry is a brick with a little girl's footprint said to be that of an Elizabeth Sanders. The foundation is ashlar limestone except under the front one-story bay window, which stands on a foundation of either smooth tan limestone or poured concrete construction. The gable roof is covered with slate shingles and is provided with lightning arrestors. Two front and two side gables have round louvered vents and ornamental cross-bracing with chamfered stanchions and cross members, turned bosses, tendril-like piercings, and a faceted pendant (the one rear gable is plain). Rising above the roof are two brick chimneys with peaked, corbeled, and recessed panels on their faces and caps with decorative corbeling of alternating projecting and recessed bricks. The roof formerly supported a widow's walk with a wood balustrade with ball finials on the corner posts. The widow's walk and a balustrade with turned balusters that ringed the top of the front bay window were removed in the 1930s to discourage the young Jennings family boys who then lived in the house from climbing out onto the main and bay window roofs.

The one-story front porch, which is believed to have been reduced in extent in the 1930s or 1940s, is supported by paired chamfered posts yoked at the top by sawn brackets with a foliated pendant in the interstices between posts. Other porch features include a bracketed cornice with shallow dentil-like ornaments in the frieze, a beaded matchboard ceiling, and an underpinning of lattice and paired brick foundation piers (formerly there were decorative pierced panels in the narrow spaces between the piers). A one-story porch was added to the west elevation in the twentieth century. A third porch, enclosed, extends across the back of the house. A porch originally stood in this location; the present one is either a reconstruction or enclosure of the original and has weatherboard siding, six-over-six windows, and beaded matchboard interior sheathing.

Other exterior features include a front entry with a two-light transom and a two-leaf front door with two panels in each leaf; two-over-two windows with splayed jack arches and molded wooden surrounds; tall two-over-four dining room windows; and a two-story rear bathroom addition of brick made in the 1930s. In front of the house extends an original or early brick walkway with a dogtooth edging. Behind the house is a modern brick patio with a circular paver design incorporating the footprints of grandchildren of the present owner, Bobby Joe Jennings.

## House Interior

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Description (continued)

The house has a modified center-passage plan. Typical finishes include plaster on brick walls with modern wallpaper, plaster-and-lath ceilings, wood floors, wood mantels, molded and beaded door and window trim, molded wood cornices, four-panel doors, and interior doorways with transoms and paneled embrasures. Each of the four principal first-floor rooms--the center passage, the front and rear parlors to the left of the passage, and the dining room to the right of the passage--have plaster ceiling medallions of varied form and ornamentation (described individually for each room). The center passage, entered through the two-leaf front door, has alternating narrow walnut and heart pine floor boards that create a two-tone striped effect, and it contains a one-run stair with turned walnut balusters and newel.

The front parlor has a basket-handle archway with a bullnose edge molding that opens into the front bay window. The medallion has a complex, almost rococo design of arabesques, ivy leaves, flowers, and stippling. The simple Victorian-inspired mantel was installed in the 1930s to replace the original, moderately more ornate Victorian mantel (now installed in an adjacent 1950s house). Other front parlor features include a rough plaster dado below a beveled chairrail, a wool carpet that has been in the room since the 1930s, and modern wallpaper reproduced from a pattern in Tudor Place, Georgetown, District of Columbia.

The rear parlor has a fireplace flanked by closets and provided with a mantel with recessed and projecting molded panels. The medallion has a compass rose-like form, incised arabesques, and stippling. A French door opens onto the side porch. The dining room has a mantel with raised panels and a peaked backboard, and a circular medallion with lobes around its edge (the four principal lobes with avocado motifs) and curved panels with incised arabesques. A small room at the east gable end, once used as a bed room, was converted into a kitchen after 1930. The 1930s bathroom has original fixtures, a tile floor, and a tall light green tile wainscot with a decorative tile border with a pattern of water lilies in pink, red, and dark green.

The second floor is similar in plan and finish to the first floor. The mantels are hybrid Greek Revival-Gothic Revival in inspiration, with peaked frieze profiles, molded pilaster caps, and bed moldings. The mantel in the southwest room is more ornate than the others, with complicated chamfering on the edges of the pilasters and frieze. The 1930s second-floor bathroom has original fixtures, a tile floor, and a tall lilac tile wainscot with a

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**Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.**

**Description (continued)**

decorative tile border with a repeating geometric pattern. The small room at the east gable end was a servants bedroom with a stair that descended through the kitchen below to a separate rear entry (now contained in the enclosed back porch). A stair above this stair provides access to the attic where circular-sawn common rafters, butted and cut-nailed at the ridge, are visible. The basement is reached by a stair under the center passage stair and has whitewashed stone walls, straight-sawn floor joists, a vertical beaded board partition painted olive drab, an early twentieth century coal bin, and a four-panel exterior door with the initials OCG painted or chalked on it.

**Outbuildings and Other Resources**

The westernmost of the outbuildings on the property is the cold frame, formerly used for starting plants. The small brick building is partly built into a bank and has a south-facing front with deteriorated wood and glass doors, a concrete roof, and a stepped concrete front parapet. East of the cold frame, uphill from and behind the Brick House, is the dairy, a barrel-vaulted stone building built into a bank with a deteriorated brick front that may once have had a decorative parapet. Inside is a stone and concrete spring trough; the building remained in use for the cool storage of dairy products as late as the third quarter of the twentieth century. East of the Brick House is a small wood shed of post construction with vertical board siding.

Northeast of the Brick House, on the north side of the driveway, is the servants quarters. The one-story two-room building of pencilled American-bond brick construction has a gable roof with corrugated metal sheathing that replaces the original slate shingles (the slates are stored in the building), a stone foundation, a center brick chimney, nine-over-six and six-over-nine windows, a batten door on the west gable end, and a pair of hinged garage doors constructed of diagonal boards on the east gable end. The east room, presumably converted into a garage or carriage house around the turn of the twentieth century or slightly later, was inaccessible to survey. The west room has plaster on brick walls, a ceiling of plaster on circular-sawn laths attached with cut nails, a beaded vertical board wainscot, and plain baseboards. The west room fireplace has a simple Greek Revival mantel painted olive drab and an iron lintel. Inside the fireplace is a cast iron fireback with a molded edge and two small brick shelves to either side. In front and to the sides of the

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Description (continued)

fireplace is a broad flagstone hearth. Herringbone brick pavers infill between the hearth and the side walls of the room. The rest of the floor is constructed of wood boards on hewn joists; the door and window lintels are also seen to be hewn where the plaster has fallen away. A ladder stair constructed with cut nails rises to the left of the chimney breast to the attic, which has circular sawn common rafters butted and nailed at the ridge.

East of the servants quarters stands the shop, a one-story frame building with weatherboard siding and a metal-sheathed shed roof. It was moved (during the historic period) to its present location from a spot closer to the road. The shop has two garage doors of diagonal board construction, an I-beam projecting above the right-hand door for lifting heavy objects, six-light side windows, a concrete foundation and floor, and exposed interior structure. On the hillside above the shop is a circular stone reservoir measuring approximately thirty feet in diameter. The reservoir was used until about 1980 and was formerly capped by a conical roof, originally wood shingled and later sheathed in metal. The store is a two-story painted cinder block building built into a bank so that its lower store level is accessible from ground level on the south side and the upper residential level is accessible from ground level on the north side. The building has a metal-sheathed shed roof with front and side parapets, an interior brick and cinder block stove flue, panel doors, six-over-six windows, and traces of former ornamental trim. The two lower-level storefront openings are boarded over. Off the southwest corner of the store stands a cinder block privy, built into a bank and overgrown with ivy.

The driveway curves around the east side of the store to connect to the main road. A farm lane branches off of it and continues eastward through a farm building complex. The first building encountered is a small frame playhouse built in the 1960s. It has white-painted board siding and a corrugated metal shed roof. On the hillside above it is the stone foundation of a barn or stable that collapsed in a 1993 snow storm. Remnants of hewn mortise-and-tenon framing suggest this building antedated the turn of the twentieth century. On the south side of the farm lane is a large granary and corncrib of wire-nailed circular-sawn frame construction with red-painted board-and-batten siding and a metal-sheathed gable roof. The building has stone footers, a batten door on plain strap hinges, and calculations written in pencil on the door and door frame. The interior has slatted cribs and ceiling grain chutes, and contains early machinery including a Fairbanks scale and a belt-driven hammer mill manufactured by the Meadows Mill Company of North Wilkesboro, N.C. The hammer mill connects to a wooden chute that projects through the east exterior wall.

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## Description (continued)

Beyond the granary stands a red-painted board-and-batten frame horse barn with a hay mow contained in a corrugated metal-sheathed gambrel roof. A hood at the top of the north front elevation once covered a pulley associated with a hay fork that still hangs on the interior. Behind the barn is a ruinous frame shed. North of the barn across the farm lane stand a corncrib and scales house. The corncrib is a small v-notched log building with a corrugated metal-sheathed gable roof, stone footers, and vertical board siding attached with cut nails. The scales house is a small building of wire-nailed circular-sawn frame construction with a metal-sheathed gable roof and open gable ends to facilitate driving wagons into the building for weighing on the floor scale. At the east end of the complex stand a mostly collapsed pole machinery shed constructed by former owner Edd Jennings in the mid-twentieth century, and a 1990s machinery shed with corrugated metal siding and gable roof sheathing.

A farm lane continues northeastward along a terrace above the river bottom to a one-story tenant house and associated resources. The tenant house appears to be of boxed construction, that is, its structure consists of overlapping vertical planks stiffened by corner posts, plates, and sills rather than conventional (for the early twentieth century) light stud-wall construction. The house has a metal-sheathed gable roof, brick-pattern asphalt siding, stone footers, and six-over-six windows. The front porch, supported on log posts, is a modern replacement. To the rear is a shed extension containing the kitchen and a modern enclosed porch addition. The interior has sheetrock walls, textured plaster and beaded matchboard ceilings, batten doors (some with wood latches), and a ca. 1960 limestone fireplace surround. Near the tenant house are a collapsed shed and privy, both frame, and crudely constructed stone abutments for a former bridge over a small ravine, either for a farm lane or for a tram line.

The hilly north end of the nominated area is the location of the Hematite Iron Company Mine. The mine is a complex of rock formations and tram line beds associated with a hematite iron ore mining operation established in the late 1880s and known to have been in operation during the first decade of the twentieth century. The rock formations are pinnacles and outcrops of limestone that were exposed when surrounding ore, rock, and soil were removed by hydraulic mining, a technique that involved the breaking down of ore bodies with pressurized water. The rock formations lie almost entirely under and to the north of a modern transmission line that crosses the property, and they are most dramatic under the transmission line. The west end of a mined ravine on the north side of the

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Sanders Farm  
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## Description (continued)

transmission line was filled with rock and soil removed when the adjacent Interstate 77 was constructed. In the unburied east end of the ravine and crossing the hillside to the south of the transmission line are the beds of former tram lines.

## Integrity Statement

The Sanders Farm possesses good integrity from the period of significance. The Brick House retains its principal character-defining exterior and interior features and finishes with only minor losses such as the reduction in size of the front porch, the removal of shutters, and the removal of the widow's walk and bay window balustrades. The complement of historic domestic and farm outbuildings is largely complete; individually these buildings generally retain their character-defining features. An aspect of integrity that has been compromised is the integrity of setting. The Interstate 77 New River bridges erected over the east end of the property in 1978-80 are a highly visible intrusion, and the traffic noise associated with them is also intrusive. The intrusiveness lessens as one moves eastward through the main building complex, and the bridges and interstate are scarcely noticeable at the distance of the tenant house.

A Phase II evaluation of the property by the William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research found that "the rural setting of Sanders Farm (98-192) was irrevocably altered by the construction of the twin Interstate 77 bridges across the property less than 200 ft. west of Sanders House." For this reason the Center recommended that the property was ineligible for the National Register (Beckett and Downing, "A phase II architectural evaluation of Sanders Farm," 33). However, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Evaluation Team disagreed with the Center's recommendation. "Although context of property has been degraded somewhat by the presence of the interstate," the Team noted, "the dwelling is considered to be a very good example of Victorian architecture for rural Wythe County." The Team recommended that the property was eligible under Criterion C (notes of April 4, 1995 Virginia Department of Historic Resources Evaluation Team Meeting).

Integrity of setting is also an issue with the Hematite Iron Company Mine. The transmission line, and to a lesser extent the interstate, represent modern intrusions that affect the setting of portions of the mine. The transmission line crosses the mine's most dramatic exposed rock formations and is highly visible there, although its physical impact on the mine is limited to the few places (perhaps only one place) where pylons have been

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Description (continued)

erected. The interstate adjoins the mined area of the nominated parcel on the west side, and its construction resulted in the filling and obscuring of a portion of the mine, although the buried area is protected from the weathering that might over time erode exposed rock formations.

Despite these intrusions, the mine retains good overall integrity. The essential visible features of the mine--the rock formations and tram line beds--remain "to convey a strong sense of connectedness between mining properties and a contemporary observer's ability to discern the historical activity which occurred at the location" (Noble and Spude, *National Register Bulletin 42: Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering Historic Mining Properties*, p. 21). Rock formations such as those of the Hematite Iron Company Mine are a defining artifact of the hydraulic mining process, and similar although much larger scale formations have been recognized as significant historic resources as, for example, at the National Register-listed Malakoff Diggins State Historical Park in Nevada County, California.

The setting of the Sanders Farm in the sense of the character of surrounding areas retains good integrity in that the area retains its rural character with scattered historic industrial/extractive resources and historic transportation infrastructure. These include the Shot Tower, the iron furnace village of Fosters Falls, and the bed of the Cripple Creek rail line, now being developed as a rails-to-trails conversion with historic interpretation.

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Summary

The Sanders Farm, located on the New River in Wythe County, Virginia, boasts a large collection of architecturally notable resources dating mostly from the period ca. 1880 through the mid-twentieth century. The property's Victorian farmhouse was built about 1880 for John P. M. Sanders, a leader in the area's iron industry. The brick house is distinguished by its ornamental gables and porches and interior plaster ceiling medallions. Near the house stand a vaulted stone springhouse and a brick servants quarters, and farther off are log and frame farm buildings, a boxed tenant house, and a cinder block store. In the late 1880s the Hematite Iron Company began the extraction of hematite iron ore on the property. Hydraulic mining with pressurized water was used to strip ore from hillsides, leaving behind dramatic rock formations, and tram line beds associated with the mine are still visible. Visible from the Sanders Farm are several notable structures: the early nineteenth century Shot Tower, one of the region's best-known historic landmarks; the 1880s Cripple Creek rail line bed; and the twin New River bridges of Interstate 77.

### Applicable Criteria

The Sanders Farm meets Criterion C and is eligible in the architecture area of significance primarily for the Sanders farmhouse, known as the Brick House, a very good example of Victorian architecture for rural Wythe County, and secondarily for architecturally notable associated buildings such as the servants quarters, springhouse, tenant house, and so forth. The property is also eligible under Criterion C in the engineering area of significance for the physical evidence of hydraulic hematite mining. This form of mining is significant as an unusual application of what was primarily a gold mining technique to the mining of iron ore in Virginia. Noble and Spude's definition for the selection of the engineering area of significance in *National Register Bulletin 42: Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering Historic Mining Properties* applies: "Mining properties often provide excellent illustrations of the changes in methods of mining technology over time" (p. 17). The period of significance extends from the ca. 1880 date of construction of the Brick House and probably several outbuildings, to 1953, embracing the construction of later buildings such as the farm store. The Sanders Farm is eligible at the local level of significance. Information in support of eligibility appears throughout the historic context.

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Statement of Significance (continued)

### Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and organizations assisted in the preparation of this report. Foremost among these were the owners of the property and the nomination's sponsors, Bobby Joe Jennings and Edd and Gordon Jennings trustees. Others who provided assistance included Tom Klatka and Marc Wagner of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The nomination relies in part on research and analysis conducted by Anne S. Beckett and Charles M. Downing appearing in the report "A phase II architectural evaluation of Sanders Farm" (1995).

### Historic Context

The Sanders Farm is located in one of Wythe County's most historically significant locales. The vicinity was first settled in the 1750s by John Bingeman, whose lands were acquired by William Herbert in 1767. By 1770 Herbert had established a ferry over the New River in front of the Sanders Farm, and by 1776 he is known to have built a house on the north side of the river adjacent to the ferry landing. The ferry passed through several owners before it was acquired by Thomas Jackson in 1815 along with acreage on the south side of the river. In the 1790s Jackson was employed as a mining smith at the Austinville lead mine several miles west of the Sanders Farm. In 1804 he purchased an interest in the mine and between 1815 and 1820 (according to architectural historian Richard M. Casella) Jackson constructed the Shot Tower on the south side of the New River across from the Sanders Farm. The Shot Tower, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1969, is operated as a state historical park.<sup>1</sup>

The Sanders family association with the nominated area began in 1808 when Stephen Sanders (1747-1830) acquired 366.75 acres on the north side of the river adjoining the ferry

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<sup>1</sup> Casella, Richard M. "Historic American Engineering Record, Jackson's Ferry Bridge," 3-5; Beckett and Downing, "Phase II architectural evaluation of Sanders Farm," 3-4. In Loth, *Virginia Landmarks Register*, p. 558, the date of the Shot Tower is given as ca. 1807. An early owner of the property is said to have remarked that the red soil on the farm reminded him of the red lands of Morocco (Bobby Joe Jennings personal communication).

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Statement of Significance (continued)

landing and including the southern end of the nominated area. Sanders, who does not appear to have lived on the parcel, probably farmed it with tenants. One or more dwellings likely stood on the property during Sanders's ownership, as suggested by 1820 county tax records which record \$1,000 value of buildings. After the death of Stephen Sanders in 1830 the property was acquired by his son John Sanders (d. 1873), who was involved in Wythe County's lead mining industry during the 1830s and 1840s. After John Sanders died in 1873 his widow Hannah Walton Sanders received a life interest in his estate. Hannah appears to have died before 1880, whereupon the estate passed to two sons: Stephen D. Sanders and John P. M. Sanders. The latter received the nominated area in an 1887 partition; however, it appears he had control of the area prior to 1880.<sup>2</sup>

John Posey Matthew Sanders (ca. 1835-1902) was involved in a number of Wythe County business ventures before the Civil War. In 1861 he was a proprietor of Grayson Sulphur Springs, located on the New River, and the same year he was an owner of the Raven Cliff Furnace. After the war Sanders teamed with industrialist James S. Crockett to operate the furnace, and in 1876 Crockett, Sanders, and Company built a new furnace at Raven Cliff. In 1879 and 1880 Sanders sold his interest in the furnace. This sale coincides with a substantial increase in the value of buildings on the nominated acreage. From 1852 on, the figure had stood at \$600, but in 1880 the value of buildings jumped to \$4,000 for "improvements added." This increase undoubtedly reflects the construction of the Brick House, which dates to the period architecturally.<sup>3</sup>

The 1880 federal census records John P. M. Sanders and his household at the time of the construction of his house. Sanders, age forty-five, gave his occupation as farmer. He lived with his wife Nannie F. Sanders (b. ca. 1835). No children then lived with the couple, and there is evidence that they were childless. Two white adolescents boarded in the Sanders household: student B. D. Kincannon and farm hand James William Tucker. John and Nannie Sanders also employed a number of African American farm hands and domestic servants. John Dent, Lewis Newton, and Frank Cornett worked as farm hands; George Adams and John Dent's wife Mollie worked in the house; and Jennie Jones cooked for the household. Towards the end of his life, John P. M. Sanders was cared for by a servant,

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<sup>2</sup> Beckett and Downing, "Phase II architectural evaluation of Sanders Farm," 3-5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 6; Kegley, *Wythe County*, 266, 351.

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Statement of Significance (continued)

Sallie Kincannon, to whom he left "the furniture in the room she occupies" (presumably the second-floor servants bedroom).<sup>4</sup>

John P. M. Sanders continued to be involved in the local iron industry after 1880. In 1886 Sanders sold thirty acres to the Hematite Iron Company for the sum of \$50,000, and in 1888 and 1889 he sold mineral rights for the nominated area to the Hematite Iron Company and the Virginia Iron, Coke, and Coal Company. These developments occurred at roughly the same time that the Norfolk & Western Railroad constructed its Cripple Creek line along the New River opposite the Sanders property. C. R. Boyd's 1888 map of Wythe County shows a spur leading from the Cripple Creek line to the workings of the Hematite Iron Company on the south slope of Cave Island Ridge (now known as Hematite Mountain). Stone bridge piers from this narrow-gauge line still stand in the river just north of the nominated area, and tram line beds run through the Sanders Farm and adjacent parcels.<sup>5</sup>

Hematite appears to have been the principal form of iron ore mined on the Sanders Farm. Also known as ferric oxide ( $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$ ), hematite is the most commercially important form of iron ore. The ore typically forms when iron in solution, leached from other rocks, forms veins in host rock, and it can be rock-like in hardness or soft and earthy. Hematite is uncommon in Virginia relative to limonite, another iron oxide ore, which formed the basis of the iron industry in Wythe County and elsewhere in the state. In 1886, apparently before the existence of the Sanders Farm hematite deposit became widely known, the U.S. Census Office reported hematite in Appomattox, Augusta, and Botetourt counties and at a locale near Wytheville in Wythe County. Hematite represented about 23% of iron ore mined in Virginia--approximately the same as the national average. Virginia ranked eighth in the nation in iron ore production with 2.29% of iron ore mined.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Douthat, *1880 Wythe County Virginia Census*, 67; Beckett and Downing, "Phase II architectural evaluation of Sanders Farm," 7.

<sup>5</sup> Beckett and Downing, "Phase II architectural evaluation of Sanders Farm," 7; Boyd, "Wythe County."

<sup>6</sup> Eaton, "Iron," 448-449; Benton, "Notes on the samples of iron ore collected in Virginia," 273, 277, Plate XXX; and Pumpelly, *Report on the Mining Industries of the United States*, 21.

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Statement of Significance (continued)

In the late 1880s and 1890s the national iron mining industry underwent major changes that affected how iron was mined in Virginia. New hematite deposits were developed in the Lake Superior iron region, culminating with the opening of the Mesabi Range in 1892, and Virginia iron mining went into decline. In 1892 Virginia and West Virginia (the two were lumped together in census reports) contributed a substantial percentage to national limonite production--over 19%--but the combined hematite production was an insignificant 0.1%. Virginia's iron industry relied principally on limonite mined in the state in 1892, about 90% of ore used, with the remainder made up of Virginia hematite and imported North Carolina magnetite.<sup>7</sup>

The original method of mining hematite on the Sanders Farm is unknown, although it is known that in 1907 the ore was in a matrix that was suitable for recovery using hydraulic mining. Therefore, hydraulic mining may have been used at the Hematite Iron Company mine from the outset. (Limonite in the area was described as being contained in a matrix of residual limestone clays; presumably the hematite was contained in a similar soft matrix.) Hydraulic mining involves the directing of a stream of pressurized water against an ore bank to excavate it and wash the ore into sluice boxes or other collectors. Hydraulic mining was a standard technique in the California gold fields where it was perfected in the 1850s, but it appears to have been less common in iron mining. In late nineteenth century hematite mining, traditional quarry and shaft mining technologies prevailed, involving the stripping of overburden, blasting, shaft-digging, and the loading of ore into tram cars. It was reported in 1892 that a Missouri iron mine used the hydraulic technique to recover iron from already mined low-grade ore and old dump piles, and the technique was used at several other mines in Virginia's New River-Cripple Creek region in 1907.<sup>8</sup>

Detailed information on the Sanders Farm hematite mine is provided by geologist Thomas Leonard Watson in his 1907 study *Mineral Resources of Virginia*. Watson described the workings as an "an old mine now operated in a small way by hydraulicing [ie. hydraulic

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<sup>7</sup> Eaton, "Iron," 450; Birkinbine, "Iron Ores," 7, 12.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Klatka personal communication; Watson, *Mineral Resources of Virginia*, 410-411, 455, 481; Carmichael, "Mining;" Wallace, *The Miners*, 24; Reynolds, "Iron-Mining Machinery and Techniques," 189-194; Birkinbine, "Iron Ores," 23; and Noble and Spude, *National Register Bulletin* 42, 30.

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Statement of Significance (continued)

mining]," and he included a photograph of the mine showing an operator directing a plume of water at an ore bank. The photograph shows the erosion produced by hydraulic mining that is still very much in evidence on the Sanders Farm. Another, much later account was provided by Anna and George Stose who noted "hydraulic methods were used in some of these mines [on Hematite Mountain], and pits 100 feet deep were excavated." (The Stoses included this description under the heading "Limonite" so it is unclear whether they are referring to the hematite mine on the Sanders Farm or nearby limonite mines.) Watson apparently visited the Sanders Farm workings shortly before they were suspended, for in a 1909 publication he did not include the mine in a list of the few Virginia hematite mines then in operation.<sup>9</sup>

John P. M. Sanders appears to have been involved in the operations of the Hematite Iron Company. The Virginia Iron, Coke, and Coal Company mined semi-limonite iron ore on Sanders's property which was transported on the same narrow-gauge spur as the hematite ore. (One of the VIC&CC mines was named the Posey Mine in honor of John Posey Matthew Sanders.) Upon his death in 1902, Sanders left his farm to three grandnephews but he granted use of the property to his nephew George Burton Sanders. A partition gave G. Burton Sanders 339 acres including the house in 1920, and he lived in the house with his wife Mary Elizabeth "Molly" Sanders into the 1930s (he probably occupied the house soon after his uncle's death, if not before). G. Burton Sanders mortgaged the property in 1924, and in 1935 the Federal Land Bank of Baltimore initiated foreclosure proceedings. In July 1935 the property was purchased by Edd Jennings.<sup>10</sup>

Prior to acquiring the property, Edd Jennings (1897-1981) operated a store in the nearby community of Poplar Camp. Jennings's "first love was always farming," according to daughter-in-law Bobby Joe Jennings, and the Sanders Farm offered him the opportunity to follow his calling. Edd, Golda Violet Dalton Jennings (1902-1991), and the couple's young sons, Edward and Brooks Gordon, moved to the farm and began making improvements.

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<sup>9</sup> Watson, *Mineral Resources of Virginia*, 455, 481; Stose and Stose, *Geology and Mineral Resources of the Gossan Lead District*, 212; and Watson, *Annual Report on the Mineral Production of Virginia . . . 1908*, 26, 29.

<sup>10</sup> Beckett and Downing, "Phase II architectural evaluation of Sanders Farm," 7; Watson, *Mineral Resources of Virginia*, 455, 481.

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Statement of Significance (continued)

The Roanoke architect who designed the nearby Jackson School was hired to design rear bathroom and porch additions, a side porch, and other alterations to the house. Subcontractors included carpenters Malcolm "Mac" Dean, Sebert Aker, and a Mr. Parnell; electrician Gene Poole; and a plumber named Plunkett. Among the improvements made to the property was the construction of the cinder-block store in the early 1950s. Carl Thompson rented the store and lived in the upstairs apartment. Also living on the farm was the Riggins family, makers of wicker furniture, who lived in the tenant house. In the 1950s Edd Jennings rented this dwelling for use by fishermen.<sup>11</sup>

In 1966 the Commonwealth of Virginia purchased thirty acres of the farm for construction of Interstate 77. The interstate and the two New River bridges were constructed in 1978-80. In 1990, shortly before the death of Violet Jennings, a 1.88-acre parcel including the main house and immediately adjacent outbuildings was conveyed to the present owner, Bobby Joe Wilson Jennings. The remaining acreage is owned in trust by Bobby Joe and Brooks Gordon Jennings's sons, Edd Brooks and Gordon W. Jennings, and the farm is managed by Edd Jennings.<sup>12</sup>

## Architectural Analysis

The Brick House--the name by which it has been known to the Jennings family for many years--is an early and well appointed example of the Queen Anne Style in Wythe County. In Wytheville, where the only extensive systematic survey has been completed in the county, Queen Anne houses date from the 1880s to the 1910s, a range that is also generally characteristic of the style nationwide. The use of red brick in the construction of the house is characteristic of early local examples of the style--for example, the 1880s expansion of the McGavock-Fulton House at 170 E. Franklin St. in Wytheville--and may be a holdover of brick domestic construction among the region's elite during the early and mid-nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bobby Joe Jennings personal communication.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.; Beckett and Downing, "Phase II architectural evaluation of Sanders Farm," 25; and Wythe County tax information.

<sup>13</sup> Pezzoni, "Wytheville Historic District," 5, 37; Bobby Joe Jennings personal communication.

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

## Statement of Significance (continued)

Several of the Sanders Farm outbuildings perpetuate earlier forms. The servants quarters is very similar in its gabled, two-room, center-chimney form to slave quarters constructed behind Virginia plantation houses during the antebellum period. It is worth noting in this regard that most of John P. M. Sanders's domestic and farm servants were African Americans in 1880. Architectural historian Anne Beckett points out the similarity of form between the vaulted stone springhouse on the property and the vaulted cellars under eighteenth-century Germanic houses in the Massanutten Settlement of Page County. It is not impossible, as Beckett suggests, that the vaulted springhouse and log corncrib antedate the 1880s, but it is equally possible that they were constructed in the 1880s (or even later) and simply perpetuate older forms. Unchinked log corncribs, for example, were well suited to their function of holding and ventilating corn, and they were cheap and easy to construct.<sup>14</sup>

Twentieth century buildings on the property also deserve comment. The barn adopts the gambrel roof form, a hallmark of progressive farming popularized by agricultural journals, university departments, and experiment stations from the late nineteenth century onward. It was probably built by G. Burton Sanders, who gained control of the farm after (if not before) his uncle John P. M. Sanders's death in 1902. The tenant house was also built during the G. Burton Sanders period. Its apparent construction technique--box framing--was unconventional in most contexts of the era but was common for small-scale dwellings such as tenant houses and worker housing in the Southern Appalachian region.

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<sup>14</sup> Bobby Joe Jennings personal communication; Beckett and Downing, "A phase II architectural evaluation of Sanders Farm," 25, 28, 33. According to Jennings family tradition, a "slave house" was taken by the construction of the Interstate 77 bridges west of the house.

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5. 512230 4080810
6. 511680 4080360
7. 511320 4080350

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated area is Wythe County tax map parcel 061-000-0000-0009A and that portion of parcel 061-000-0000-0009 east of Interstate 77 excepting the Route 52 Jackson Ferry Bridge.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the nominated area encompass that portion of the present parcels on which the Sanders House and associated resources stand, less that portion of the property spanned by the Interstate 77 New River bridges and that portion of the property separated by the bridges from the portion containing the historic resources described in the nomination.

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

PHOTOGRAPHS

1.     1. Subject: Sanders Farm (same for all photos)  
       2. Location: Wythe Co., Va. (same for all photos)  
       3. Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni (same for all photos)  
       4. Photo date: (same for all photos)  
       5. Original negative (VDHR # 20261) archived at the Virginia Department of  
Historic  
          Resources, Richmond (same for all photos)  
       6. Description of view: Main house front (south) and east elevations. View looking  
          northwest.  
       7. Photograph number appears at beginning of entry (same for all photos)
2.     6. Main house east and north elevations. View looking southwest.
3.     6. Main house front parlor.
4.     6. Servants quarters. View looking northeast.
5.     6. Store (left), shop (middle), and granary (right). View looking northwest.
6.     6. Tenant house. View looking northeast.
7.     6. Tram line traces (far hillside) associated with the Hematite Iron Company Mine.  
          View looking northeast.
8.     6. Rock formations associated with the Hematite Iron Company Mine spanned by  
1970s  
          transmission line. View looking east.

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Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.

Exhibit A: Sanders Farm nominated area. Scale: 1 inch equals approx. 200 feet. Resources keyed by number to nomination inventory. Size and placement of resources approximate. Number and direction of view of exterior photographs indicated by triangular markers.

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**Sanders Farm  
Wythe Co., Va.**

Map drawn from Wythe County tax maps.